

JLC Position Paper
Burial Vaults for Virginia State Veterans Cemeteries

1. **OBJECTIVE:** To provide burial vaults at no cost to support the interment of veterans at state veterans cemeteries.
2. **BACKGROUND:**
 - A burial vault is an in-ground protective concrete shell into which a casket is placed
 - Burial vaults stabilize the cemetery grounds by preventing subsidence around the burial site
 - At national cemeteries, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides burial vaults at no cost
 - At Virginia's state veterans cemeteries, veterans are required to purchase burial vaults from a funeral home at a cost of \$800 to \$1,200
 - DVS can purchase burial vaults in bulk for approximately \$450 per vault
 - A special piece of equipment, called a vault cart, is required to place a burial vault in the ground. Vault carts cost approximately \$16,000.
 - The Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia does not have a vault cart
 - The Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Cemetery in Suffolk has a vault cart
 - The planned Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Dublin will have a vault cart
3. **DISCUSSION:**
 - Virginia state veterans cemeteries should provide the same level of service as national cemeteries
 - This should include providing burial vaults at no cost to Virginia veterans and eligible family members
 - To provide this service to Virginia veterans and eligible family members, DVS would need:
 - \$270,000 per fiscal year (600 burials/year x \$450 per burial vault)
 - \$16,000 in one-time funding to purchase vault cart for the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia
4. **RECOMMENDATION:** That the Governor and General Assembly provide \$286,000 in the first year and \$270,000 annually thereafter to provide burial vaults at no cost to Virginia veterans and eligible family members